



FEAR FREE BOARDING & DAYCARE INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Module 1: Body Language and the Fundamentals of Fear Free

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Welcome to Module 1 of the Fear Free Boarding and Daycare Individual Certification Program: Body Language and the Fundamentals of Fear Free! We are honored to have you join our mission to protect and promote the emotional wellbeing of animals.

Fear Free is a multifaceted, multi-species, and multi-focused movement. It originated in the veterinary industry with a vision for extending its vital application to positively protecting and influencing the lives of animals in other areas of their living and care, such as grooming, training, and shelters.

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As a boarding and daycare professional, you play a special role in protecting and promoting the wellbeing of animals through your ongoing oversight, guidance, and care.

Boarding and daycare providers typically spend long hours and sometimes several days in a row with the animals they care for, giving them repeated glimpses into an animal's personality, behavior and physical and emotional health. Because of this, boarding and daycare providers can readily identify opportunities for improvement and spot emerging behavior concerns that might otherwise go unnoticed.

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Creating a happy, Fear Free boarding and daycare experience for the pets in your care has tremendous benefits, including the following:

Calmer, happier, less stressed animals are easier, safer, and more enjoyable to interact with and care for. They are more likely to calmly cooperate and your ability to provide safe, high-quality care is improved. So, too, is the ability to foster trust and deeper emotional bonds with the pets you care for, and their humans as well.

When pets are less stressed, the physical and emotional demands of boarding and daycare tasks and safety risks decrease dramatically.

Fear Free care oftentimes reignites the original love and passion people felt for animals in the first place; which in turn leads to a revival of positive change that's felt by clients, their animals, and those providing the care.

Knowing that you're invested in taking the necessary efforts to safeguard their animal's emotional experience during their care can ease pet guardians' tensions and concerns about the type of experience their animal will have in your care.



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Fear Free isn't just the right thing to do ethically; it's also better business that can help boost the bottom line by increasing client loyalty, giving your business a competitive advantage, and potentially allowing you to charge more for your higher quality services.

In truth, no review matters more to your clients than how their dog or cat responds to your facility. And, if their pets are happier, safer, and less stressed compared to other experiences they've had, they're all the more likely to invest in the higher quality boarding and daycare that's well worth the price.

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Throughout this course the general term of boarding and daycare provider will be used, and the advice applies whether you're watching dogs in a daycare setup, keeping dogs in separate spaces for boarding only, or providing a combination of both.

Also, you'll notice that the examples provided in the Fear Free Boarding and Daycare Individual Certification Program primarily involve dogs, as they make up the majority of clientele. However, some facilities offer multi-species boarding, so we'll include some cat-related videos and examples throughout the course as well.

Fear Free is applicable and important across all animal species. Many of the concepts, including setting up a calming environment and using a "less is more" approach to handling are applicable across different species. How the approach, handling and interactions are best conducted may differ slightly between animals based on species' sensitivities and preferences. The general concepts of Fear Free, though, including prioritizing the animal's emotional needs throughout all interactions and care, apply for all animals.

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In terms of course layout, the Fear Free Boarding and Daycare Individual Certification course is made up of 5 modules, with multiple lessons within each module. At the end of each module a quiz will be presented. It must be passed with a score of 80% or better in order to progress to the next module. Once all coursework and quizzes are completed and passed, there's a Fear Free Boarding and Daycare Professional pledge to look over and sign that acknowledges your commitment to providing emotionally and physically protective services to pets in your care. And, once you've successfully completed the course and pledge, you will officially become a Fear Free Certified Boarding and Daycare Professional!

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Also, there are complimentary, science-based, veterinary-approved educational articles, videos, and handouts directed towards pet owners that are available at fearfreehappyhomes.com. These can be accessed at any time by you, your colleagues, your clients, or your wider community. We encourage you to check out this valuable resource and refer your clients to it.



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Throughout the course you'll learn the specific ways that boarding and daycare providers can help reduce pets' fear, anxiety and stress (FAS), and increase the happy, calm, fulfilled emotional experiences animals have.

This course will equip boarding and daycare providers with a scientifically sound knowledge base in animal learning and behavior basics, so that they can provide some very basic frontline behavior support and help refer to other professionals when needed. The Fear Free Certified boarding and daycare professional will be empowered to help educate pet guardians on reading dog and cat body language, and provide ideas for how enrichment can be incorporated into the pet's boarding and daycare environment. We'll cover everything from how to greet a pet, to creating a safer and more enjoyable kennel environment, to optimizing dog-to-dog interactions and play, basic behavior knowledge, strategies to reduce animals' stress during medication administration or illnesses, and much more!

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Here's a breakdown of modules in the course:

- Module 1: Body Language and Fear Free Core Concepts
- Module 2: Fear Free Facility Setup
- Module 3: Group Play and Dog-to-Dog Interactions
- Module 4: Training and Behavior Basics for Boarding and Daycare
- Module 5: Physical Care, Illness, and Administering Meds

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After completing Module 1, you will be able to:

- Recognize damaging effects caused by prolonged and elevated levels of fear, anxiety and stress (FAS)
- Read dog and cat body language signals to interpret their emotional states and respond accordingly
- Explain each of the Fear Free core concepts: Considerate Approach, Gentle Control and Touch Gradient and how they apply to boarding and daycare providers.

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This module contains five lessons:

- Lesson 1: The Impact of Fear, Anxiety and Stress
- Lesson 2: Body Language 101
- Lesson 3: Considerate Approach
- Lesson 4: Gentle Control and Touch Gradient
- Lesson 5: Arrival at the Facility



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Lesson One: The Impact of Fear, Anxiety and Stress

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Before we delve into ways to identify and reduce fear, anxiety and stress and how you can apply that knowledge in your role as a boarding and daycare provider, we want to give you a basic understanding of exactly what stress is, how it impacts the body, and why we should care so much about reducing it.

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After completing this lesson you will be able to:

- Define Fear, Anxiety and Stress (FAS).
- Explain changes that occur in a body resulting from elevated levels of fear, anxiety and stress
- Detailed ways in which high stress alters normal thinking and functioning.
- Explain some of the ways that chronic stress impacts the body.

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The Fear Free mission is to prevent and alleviate fear, anxiety and stress in pets. From here on, fear, anxiety and stress will be abbreviated as F-A-S. FAS is a Fear Free term for the varying negative emotional states of distress and panic that prompt survival-based, fight-or-flight responses.

It is sometimes challenging to distinguish between the components of FAS, because animals can't verbalize their feelings and tell us exactly how they feel. But, it helps to understand a little more detail about fear, anxiety and stress.

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Fear is an aversive emotional state consisting of physical and psychological responses to a real or perceived threat or danger. Fear involves the immediate moment and direct experience at hand, with the pet reacting fearfully to stimuli they may see, hear, smell, feel or otherwise experience. In boarding, a dog or cat may experience fear when they're being transported past a row of kennels and are suddenly startled by the harsh clang of a snarling, barking dog launching their body up against the gate as the small pet is carried past. The animal's brain and body are responding in fear to an immediate threat that can be seen, heard, and most likely, smelled.

In contrast, **anxiety** is a generalized feeling of apprehension or *anticipation* of danger or a threat. Anxiety is the 'oh no!' feeling regarding what is about to come next. The animal's body moves into a state of high alert as a result, even before the actual fear-evoking stimulus arrives. The next time the same dog or cat is taken past the same row of cages the animal may tense up in nervous anticipation. Anxiety causes the dog or cat to display FAS behaviors even outside of the presence of the actual stimulus of concern.



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Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. The body's stress response is mounted in response to an actual threat, a perceived threat, or physical trauma.

Some stress is a given, to varying degrees for pets in boarding and daycare environments, as social interactions, physical movement, and environments, individuals, and routines outside of their established normal home are likely to elevate stress.

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It's important to note that not all stress is bad. In reality, if we aren't experiencing stress to one degree or another, we aren't alive, as stress and our response to stress is a normal, necessary aspect of every living being's life. Some stress, called *eustress*, is in fact helpful for the body's daily functioning; including eating, moving, sleeping, or the body's ability to optimally perform both physically and mentally during a specific performance or challenge, such as added focus and strength to ace a test, give a performance, or run a race well.

However, the type of stress encompassed in FAS is the negative, potentially harmful, type of stress called *distress*. Distress increases tension and sends the body into a survival state of fight or flight.

The stress response that's engaged and fueled by FAS, creates physical changes in the body, as well as changes in the animal's behavior, all in an attempt to keep the animal safe and return the body to a normal state of healthy functioning that's relatively in balance, called homeostasis.

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Certain stimuli may evoke FAS based on the anticipation or perception of a real or imagined threat or danger. FAS-inducing stimuli are called 'stressors'. A stressor may also be referred to as a 'trigger' in a training and behavior context.

A *stressor* is any experience, environment, or inanimate or living object that disrupts the body's normal state of functioning. The presence of a stressor results in a stress response that sets off physical and behavioral changes in the body that attempt to return the body to normal state of functioning and health.

The response can be mild or intense along a spectrum, with intensity level increasing. The more severe the response, the longer it takes for the animal to return to a baseline state of calm.

Whether or not the stressor that elicits FAS in the pet is 'valid' or 'real' from the outside perspective is irrelevant. Perception is reality when it comes to how the animal feels and how their body responds.



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Stressors fall into 3 general categories: environmental, physiological, and psychosocial.

Environmental stressors are what the animal experiences in the surrounding environment that evokes FAS, such as hot or cold temperatures, high humidity, and reflective or slippery surfaces. A dog may experience FAS for instance upon entering a facility that has a slick linoleum or tile floor or has contrasting, disorienting areas of bright light. Or, a loud industrial vacuum may elevate FAS and disrupt sleep.

Physiological stressors are those stressors experienced within the animal's own body that set off or make the animal more at risk of FAS, such as illness, pain, thirst, and exhaustion. Inadequate duration or quality of deep sleep as can be common in a boarding environment, for instance, can be detrimental to the animal's physical and emotional wellbeing.

Psychosocial stressors are experienced in relation to the interactions and experience of other living beings that induce FAS, such as having prolonged, direct eye contact from another animal or being approached and bumped while eating or resting. For instance, dogs in their kennel runs can experience frustration and elevated FAS when other dogs are moved in front of their run. Further, the dog walking by the runs is likely to feel agitated and upset by what may be threatening displays such as barking, growling and body slams against the door of their run. Or, cats housed in proximity to one another may feel threatened if visually exposed to another cat and especially a dog.

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Pain and illness elevate FAS. For Fear Free to be most impactful and for the animal to have an enjoyable, safe stay, it's important for all animals to have properly managed and treated pain and other medical conditions that may otherwise adversely impact the animal's welfare during their stay. Pain management is also important for daycare goers.

Anticipating potential pain, as with an arthritic dog that loves to play, but can also get sore and grouchy by the end of the day if they've played too hard for too long, is important. For such a dog it may be beneficial to limit more of the rough and tumble play to a more laid-back playgroup. Or, offer short play periods interlaced with ample time to recover and rest.

Not only is such pain management important for the dog's own welfare and wellbeing, but it's also imperative for protecting other interacting pets and people, as an animal that's in pain is more likely to display defensive aggression.

A previously easygoing pet that shows a pronounced behavior change is best directed to the pet's veterinarian, as underlying illness or physical pain may be to blame for the change. For one pug, Bruce, the comment from his daycare that he snapped a couple of times at other dogs when entering and exiting the play yard was enough cause for concern for the owner to visit their vet who diagnosed Bruce with thymoma and concurrent lymphoma. Were it not for his change in behavior being noticed at daycare, it's unlikely his diagnosis would have come until much later in the cancer progression.



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When the body mounts a physiologic stress response, all body systems are affected. The stress response sets off chemical and hormonal messages throughout the body, starting with engagement of the sympathetic nervous system.

The reaction takes only a fraction of a second upon perceiving a stressor. Then, after the immediate stress reaction that sends chemical messages throughout the body, stress hormones are released, including cortisol that's secreted by the adrenal glands.

Physiological changes from the engaged stress response include elevations in heart rate, blood pressure, temperature and blood glucose, or blood sugar level.

Internally, energy is diverted away from long-term tasks, like digestion, and directed towards more immediate needs, channeling blood flow and energy into the muscles of the outside limbs to offer immediate bursts of energy, strength, and speed for quick getaway and defense.

In a boarding situation, sometimes pets refuse to eat their meals or a tasty treat when they arrive at the facility. With digestion on pause, the animal may be overly picky or uninterested in food, because their body's focused on surviving the immediate moment, rather than sustenance for long-term maintenance. Disrupted digestion also increases the likelihood of vomiting and diarrhea. Or, the animal may lose bladder control.

Note that if a pet refuses to eat or has vomiting, diarrhea or potty accidents that don't resolve quickly, it's worth a call to the owner and possibly a trip to the veterinarian.

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Higher level, rational, executive thinking decreases as an animal in fight-or-flight mode devotes primary energy to survival, relying on 'lizard brain' thinking and reactionary instincts to evade or escape the threat.

With higher-level thinking impaired and the animal in a reactionary state, they may appear oblivious and fail to respond to even well-known behaviors, like recognizing their name, requests to sit, or even taking a treat. In such a state, animals may mistakenly be considered 'stubborn', 'defiant', or even dumb, when in reality, the animal is too stressed to think straight. You may have even noticed this with your own pet at the veterinarian's office or elsewhere. Keep in mind if the pets you are watching are unable to respond to previously learned cues, it is probably because they are stressed.

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The body is only meant to be in a high-stress state for a short period. If stress continues long term, the animal is in distress, with damage being done as the animal's system is flooded with the impact of a delayed stress response that's called chronic stress.



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Longer lasting FAS-inducing events may result in chronic stress. This could be something like a long-term boarding in less-than-optimal conditions or the animal suffering from chronic under-treated pain.

As a boarding and daycare provider, note any changes in what the animal *isn't* doing: a void in healthy, normal behaviors. This could be a sudden reluctance to engage in play, withdrawal from social interactions or seeming inability to fully settle down to rest or sleep. Or, for a cat, irregular grooming or reduced use of their litter box, scratchpad or climbing areas and decreased eating or drinking (which can lead to serious, potentially life-threatening problems).

Lack of quality rest is also another serious sign of pronounced FAS, as pets with elevated FAS may feign sleep; giving off the impression of being asleep, using it as a form of escape in a situation of high FAS that can't easily be avoided.

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- FAS is Fear Free terminology for fear, anxiety and stress.
- Fear involves the immediate moment, whereas anxiety is a generalized feeling of apprehension or anticipation of danger or a threat.
- The type of stress categorized in FAS is distress; a negative, potentially harmful state.
- Stressors can be environmental, physiological (such as pain), and psychosocial.

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Lesson Two: Body Language 101

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After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Recognize the importance of reading body language signals
- Explain the stress responses known as the "Four F's"
- Note body language signals indicating rising FAS in dogs & cats

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Animals cannot speak, but they certainly can and *do* communicate! The more adept we become at reading their body language, the more we help alleviate their FAS. We also increase physical safety for both pets and people during interactions and care.

An animal's body language can indicate consent or dislike during our interactions with them. Assumptions can be dangerous, such as assuming that a dog or cat is enjoying petting. Instead, their body language offers an essential way to ask the pet continually if they're comfortable with an encounter or experience, rather than wrongly assuming or expecting that they are.



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The best way to know whether an animal is relaxed enough to interact or to calmly cope with the potential stress of a care procedure, such as an ear cleaning, is to watch her body language.

It's essential to regularly "ask" the animal how she feels about a given interaction or situation by watching her body language and responding immediately and compassionately, backing off and removing stressors to reduce signs of FAS when necessary.

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The skillset of being able to read and respond appropriately to body language is important for everyone who cares for animals. It is especially critical for those such as boarding and daycare professionals who spend an extended period of time with animals – particularly those with whom they may or may not have existing relationships. Accurately reading their body language is an excellent way to quickly learn the likes and dislikes of the pets you are caring for and keep everyone safe and happy.

And, while there are some obvious indicators of FAS, like physically trembling or hiding, more subtle signs can be easy to miss. When the more subtle signs of FAS are missed, the animal will often escalate his request for space with a more intense reaction, sometimes involving aggression.

As such, it's important to attend to early signs of FAS.

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There are 4 behavioral categories of responses to FAS, often called the "Four F's":

- Fret or Fidget
- Freeze
- Flight and Fight

These charts show detailed descriptions of the Four F's for both cats and dogs. Click on the buttons to download the dog and cat charts.

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The first stage is Fret or Fidget. Human fret or fidget behaviors include nail biting, twisting hair or clothing, foot tapping, stretching, nail tapping, fidgeting in place, yawning, and nervous laughter.

Animals in a state of fidget may appear on edge, unsettled, and unable to fully relax. This stage can include behaviors such as slow pacing, panting, and vigilance.

Animals in a state of fret may appear to be overly energetic. This could be an animal who appears in near-constant motion, seemingly unable to stay still, sometimes accompanied by excitable barking or jumping up.



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Other signs include a head turn or body arcing away from the stressor, lip licking, a shake off of the body as if they were wet, yawning, sniffing the ground, and sudden sitting, scratching or grooming and licking of the body.

When a dog suddenly acts “silly” with puppy-like antics, consider that the cause may be underlying FAS, with the dog displaying appeasement gestures to defuse the situation, release tension, and ward off potential aggression or further threat.

Leaving such subtle signs of FAS unaddressed increases likelihood of progressing to more serious signs.

Slide 30 Video: Fret and Bow Doggy Haven Class

Signs of fret and fidget, such as repeated lip licks and vocalizing, are present in this pooch as he’s approached in a class hosted within a boarding and daycare facility.

Slide 31 Video: Lab FAS fret and Freeze

A waiting area can be a stewpot of stress for pets who are unpredictably exposed to numerous people and pets. As you watch this video, notice yawning, panting, trembling, lip licking, and more. This dog was kept in the waiting area too long and his FAS was not attended to in a timely manner.

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Another behavioral response to FAS is Freeze. Animals who remain still and seem unresponsive to the environment are in freeze mode. Unfortunately, it’s often confused with compliance, but is actually fear or helplessness.

Have you heard someone say, “I was scared stiff”? It’s the same for animals. Sometimes fear immobilizes them. Much like a deer in the headlights, these animals are seemingly locked and frozen in place. This is a common reaction many dogs have when a person hovers over them to pet them on the head.

Animals paralyzed in fear are like the calm before the storm, as these negative, fear-evoking situations can create long-lasting fear memories that intensify future emotional reactions.

For this reason, animals who did “just fine” in their younger years, because they were frozen in fear, may suddenly become unmanageable. In reality, they were displaying signs of FAS all along, but their signs of fear were overlooked or misunderstood as permissive compliance.

Animals in such an upset state may also feign sleep, as another mode of escape from an otherwise overwhelming and upsetting situation. Such animals may actually appear ‘sleepy’ or ‘relaxed’ when they’re in reality anything but.

Slide 33 Video: Cat FAS Freeze

This clip shows a cat in freeze mode with widely dilated pupils and immobilized in his kennel.



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Another behavioral response is Flight. Animals who attempt to flee the scene and move or run away, slink under a chair or bed, put their ears back, tuck their tail, and lower their body are in flight mode; they wish to escape.

In a daycare this may be the dog that's hiding behind equipment, a mop bucket or a chair, tucked tightly into a corner or against the wall, or the dog that's turning tail to escape advancing interest from another dog.

If you've ever seen a cat slink their body down low to dart off and hide under or behind an item in their living space when you pull out the carrier, or a dog try to dash through your legs and out the door, or pull back on the leash to attempt to follow their guardian as they leave, these are examples of a Flight response.

If the flight option is hindered, the animal may take "flight" by hiding or searching for a mode of escape. When held down or restrained, the animal may lean away or twist, pull, and struggle in an attempt to break free.

If cornered, trapped, or restrained, the animal may progress to "Fight" with defensive aggression to escape and flee from the threat at hand. Such behavior may be seen in the cat that hisses, airplane ears out to the side, swats at the threat, which may be an open hand reaching for the stressed out feline in an enclosed cage. Then, with eyes still on the threat, the cat may then feel the threat is pacified enough to more safely shrink away behind their litter box or bed.

Slide 35 Video: Chandler FAS in boarding

Boarding dog Chandler has high FAS in response to barking dogs who had previously scared her with threatening displays as she was walking past their runs. Chandler is in between freeze and flight mode. Unable to physically get away, she's taking flight the best she can and attempting to hide with limited options available.

Slide 36 Video: IMG 5964.mov

A dog fearful of men is rewarded for approaching a man sitting on a chair. Averting his gaze and keeping his body turned away instead of directly facing the dog makes him slightly less threatening. But note that the dog is still in a high state of FAS with tail tucked and weight shifted back, ready to make a quick getaway to safety at any escalating sign of threat.

Slide 37 Video: IMG 7433.mov

Dogs may also take 'flight' by seeking out and 'hugging' their safe people they climb or jump up on as another form of escape from a scary situation, as seen in this video.



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Animals in Fight mode may struggle, growl, snap, or bare their teeth; they are attempting to drive away the threat. When the animal's option of flight and escape is impeded by an obstacle limiting free movement, like a dog being pinned underneath a looming dog above, being cornered against a fence line or building, or limited by the length of a tight leash, the animal may progress into fight mode as a last resort to defend himself against the perceived threat.

Aggression can be learned and strengthened as a go-to coping mechanism for many animals who have learned through previous experience that more subtle communication signals didn't work to "turn off" unwanted interaction or perceived aggression from others. Such animals may be said to have taken a good self-defense class. So, while still responding out of FAS, the animal has simply become more confident in their skills of defending and protecting themselves against danger should the need arise. Such animals may be mistakenly characterized as "mean," "dominant," or simply "aggressive." In reality, the root cause for most aggression is underlying FAS. These animals have learned that "a good offense is the best defense." While the aggressive dog or cat may seem scary, they're likely very scared themselves.

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It's not only overly upsetting, but also dangerous to force an animal into a situation that makes him or her feel overly upset and unsafe. For instance, a dog that avoids other dogs and becomes immobile in the corner of the play area, frozen along the fence and stiffening up or turning away as others approach, is not feeling 'okay' or having fun in that scenario. Such a dog may eventually escalate to aggression to defend themselves against a perceived threat. Or, the dog may give up self-protective efforts all together and become overwhelmed to the point of inaction, and collapse into a state called "learned helplessness," as we will soon discuss. Even if the dog continues to freeze or take flight and avoid the other dogs, or collapses inward on themselves, rather than having a progression to aggression as is a serious risk for occurring, the animal's wellbeing is undeniably compromised and a welfare issue is at play.

Slide 40 Video: Bones Box Fight

Scared pets may appear scary as a way to chase away the perceived threat. It's unlikely an aggressing dog really 'thinks they're tough'. In all likelihood the 'acting tuff' is all outward bluff, while inside the dog likely feels insecure and unsafe. Whether the perceived stressor is valid or real is up to the PET, not us, to determine. In this video, a pug is scared of some moving boxes and displaying some signs of "Fight" mode.

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Forcing an animal to face their fears in a sink-or-swim approach called 'flooding' that overexposes an animal to an FAS-inducing scenario is both harmful and dangerous. One example of flooding that may occur in daycare is the attempt to 'socialize' a dog with poor social skills through daycare; immersing the fearful dog in an overwhelming sea of unfamiliar dogs. Sure, the dog may forgo their normal aggressive reaction when approached by a canine mob, but it's unlikely the dog actually feels better about other



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dogs. Instead, it's more likely they're scared into silence. This isn't a safe practice for that dog, nor for other dogs in the vicinity who may suffer physical or emotional harm in the process.

The reality is that not all dogs are great candidates for group dog play at daycares or the dog park. Setting realistic expectations for pet guardians is important for both the individual animal's welfare as well as the safety and well-being of the group as a whole. In some situations, with very careful, gradual introductions and specially selected canine friends with similar energy levels and good social skills, a dog with limited doggy experience can gradually gain confidence with being around other dogs. However, such exposure takes time, and does not happen all at once.

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Animals who learn their behavior has no effect on the outcome they want to avoid, or escape may give up altogether and shut down. Outwardly the animal may stop responding to the stressor in what may be mistakenly labeled as "calm," "submissive," or "knowing who's boss." But, inside the animal is feeling pure terror.

Animals overwhelmed by a situation that exposes them to an FAS-inducing stressor are in jeopardy of collapsing into a state of tonic immobility called learned helplessness. Learned helplessness has similarities to severe human depression. When an animal enters a state of learned helplessness they've essentially given up trying, having learned that nothing they can do will work to help them escape the threat.

Learned helplessness may occur for instance in a terrified daycare dog who is forced to stay in the play yard with other dogs, when they're too terrified to have fun. A dog may also enter this state during force-based training after being punished repeatedly during exposure to the stimulus that caused their upset reaction. The dog may collapse and cease to react, but not because he feels better or knows how to respond to get the desired outcome in the future. He's been disabled, disempowered, and fallen into a state of collapsing immobility.

Rather than leaving an animal better off by what they endured, learned helplessness is a serious risk that an animal can become all the more sensitized to the situation and have an even more pronounced physical and emotional FAS-based reaction in the future.

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It is important to be highly observant when you're working with animals—by looking closely at their body postures and behaviors. There are 8 key points of observation to notice in dogs and cats:

- Overall body posture
- Hair coat
- Eyes
- Ears
- Mouth
- Tail



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- Vocalizing
- Animal in context

Always note the animal's overall body posture—are they leaning toward you or away from you, or is their stance neutral? Do they appear relaxed—loose and wiggly—or are they tense and stiff? To what degree?

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Is their hair coat standing up on end – or is it lying normally against their body?

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Not all dogs with hair standing up on their neck and back (called piloerection), are aggressive. It simply means that the animal is emotionally aroused. Fluffed up fur indicates big emotions are going on below the surface. But, what that emotion is, whether underlying fear or excitement, is best deciphered when gauged against the surrounding context and other body language and behavior signals the animal gives off. The dog in this picture was anxious about another dog walking by her yard.

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Looking carefully at the animal's face is very important and will give you a lot of insight into how that animal is feeling emotionally.

What do their eyes look like—are they looking at you or away from you-- do they have a hard stare or a soft, starry eyed gaze? Are their eyes wide open or are they squinting or blinking?

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What is the position of their ears? Are they holding them upright, or are they flattened or pinned against the head? Are they held forward, sideways, backwards, or in a neutral position? Or, do they shift back-and-forth?

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What do you notice about the mouth? Is it open or closed? Loose or tense? Are their lips relaxed and neutral, or are they pulled back or puckered up? Are any of their teeth showing? Are they licking their lips? Are they panting?



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And what about their tail? Is it held very high, very low or somewhere in between? Is it wagging and if so, how is it wagging? For cats, is the tail tip turned up or down? Is it waving, swishing, twitching or vibrating?

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Is the animal vocalizing? Barking, growling, howling, or whining? Mewing, purring, or chirping? Hissing, yowling, or screaming?

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Always look at the whole animal in the context of the situation and environment. Try to determine if specific stressors are triggering the animal's behavior.

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Another commonly misunderstood and mischaracterized behavior in dogs is mounting, or humping that's commonly misinterpreted as a dog trying to assert status and establish dominance.

Rather than a strategic power play, mounting outside of the context of mating most often occurs when a dog is also emotionally aroused. A nervously excited dog may mount or hump for instance the same way an apprehensive person may drum their fingers on a desk, shuffle their feet, nervously laugh, fill the air with empty and fast chatter, or feel a sudden urge to check their phone.

For other dogs, mounting is simply a part of their play repertoire. With that said, because it can be rather one-sided fun, gently interrupting and redirecting the mounting dog may still be necessary. Some mounted dogs may panic when suddenly limited in movement and feeling trapped. It's important to note that we can interrupt mounting without unfair and unnecessary labels like "dominance" and underlying motivations like social climbing attached.

Slide 54 Video: Brio anxiety tail wag

One common misinterpretation is that a wagging tail always signals a friendly, happy dog. This assumption has left many a person in shocked confusion after a wagging-tailed dog growled, lunged or bit. The reality is, not all tail wags are happy or friendly. A tail wag simply signals the intent to interact. But, whether that interaction is friendly or ferocious is based upon the type of wag and as is viewed against the rest of the dog's body signaling and interpreted based upon the surrounding circumstances. The dog in this video is wagging her tail. When we play selected clips without the sound, it would be easy to mistake her for happy and relaxed. But when we play the full clip with sound on, it's clear that she's actually quite anxious.

Slide 55 Videos: Dog Body Language 101



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Here is an important body language video to watch, re-watch, and share with your clients and colleagues for important signs of FAS, as well as relaxation and happiness, to observe in the body language of dogs. It is available on the free website Fear Free Happy Homes that also offers many other science-backed resources for your own use and to share with clients.

Slide 56 Video: Cat Body Language 101 from FFHH

Here is a similar body language video for cats. It is also available for free on FearFreeHappyHomes.com

Slide 57

The specifics of dog play will be covered more in depth in a later module. But for now, it's helpful to keep in mind some of the play behaviors and body language signals dogs display that signal a happy, feel-good interaction. These include:

- Mutual roles and some back and forth. While dogs rarely have a perfect 50-50 split between roles, such as chaser and chasee, there should be some back and forth. Or, each dog should have a high degree of comfort in their given role.
- Play bows are integral to play. A play bow sends a signal to the other dog that what happens next is all in good fun.
- Self-handicapping, or limiting their own strength, speed, or other agility to make it more “fair” to their play partner is another aspect of dog play. For instance, one dog may turn their hip to the other dog, and then do a shoulder and eventually full body roll down on the ground. You may see well-socialized, playful larger dogs self-handicapping when playing with a smaller doggie friend.
- Healthy play also has breaks in between bouts of fun. Breaks offer a mini cooldown in between wrestling and chase that can otherwise become overstimulating.

Slide 58 Video: Indiana Bones and Radar

Here, Cane Corso, Radar, is introduced to Indiana Bones, who to this day still loves being with the big dogs! You'll see evidence of how Radar both self handicaps and encourages Indiana Bones with big play bows and running away.

Slide 59 Otis, Indy Dog laugh mutual role playing, breaks

In this video clip, you'll hear dog laughs; a huff sound that resembles something between a sigh and a forced pant. Both dogs are comfortable in their given roles; one being 'it' and doing the chasing and the other enjoying being chased in their version of canine tag.

Slide 60 Video: GOOD dog play at Doggy Haven Resort dog class

Here's a happy play interaction between two dogs after a training class held at a boarding and daycare facility.



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When experiencing FAS, animals may display more than one category of the four Fs in their response. The response progression isn't always linear either. Instead of progressing in a stepwise fashion, some animals may progress quicker and bypass earlier signs, moving with little warning into fight mode.

When this occurs, it's often due to previous learning experiences, including those where animals were not "heard" after polite warnings, like pulling away when uncomfortable with ear cleaning, but were only heard once they progressed to a louder "shout," such as a snap.

Or, a cat may display a slight freeze, tail thump or lip lick before progressing into a hiss or swat.

Slide 62

Unfortunately, many animals have learned to silence early warning signals such as growls, barks and lunges, if they were punished or scolded for doing so in the past. With earlier levels of communication compromised and the underlying FAS left unaddressed or even worsened by the aversive consequence, the animal may progress faster, with less warning, into more serious measures to get their point across. Hence the 'dog that bit without warning' may have been the dog that was punished for speaking up when they felt unsafe.

Because of this, it's important not to punish warning signs, like growling or showing of teeth, because they're important ways animals communicate their discomfort and peaceably resolve conflict without progressing further into a physical fight.

Slide 63

Fear Free categorizes body language and behavioral responses to FAS on a spectrum of 0 to 5, with Level 0 being happy relaxation and Level 5 being aggression.

An animal's body language and behavior and their alignment on the FAS Spectrum can help determine when to adjust a situation to create a Fear Free experience for the pet. The FAS Spectrum is useful for keeping interactions as pleasant and safe as possible by heeding different signs that indicate the need to re-evaluate the situation, adjust, pause, or stop the encounter altogether to alleviate further FAS. Download these two handouts that can be shared with clients and colleagues. They show the FAS Spectrum for both dogs and cats.

Slide 64

Fear Free has also developed an FAS Scale with three categories of FAS: low, moderate, and high, with scores from zero to five. The 3 categories are Green for Go, Yellow for Caution or Pause, and Red for Stop. The FAS levels of 0 through 5 within those categories correspond with those you saw in the FAS Spectrum.



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The FAS Scale provides a clear, objective means of communicating about an animal's experiences and provides guidance on how to proceed. Uniform, consistent scoring of FAS is a key way for *all* Fear Free Certified Professionals, including pet boarding and daycare professionals, pet sitters, trainers, groomers, and veterinary professionals, to communicate about an animal. It allows for partnerships among all these professionals and helps ensure consistent Fear Free care.

Having a solid understanding of the scale, and using it to communicate with others, allows for a more effective way to address potential problems and to keep animals in a minimal state of FAS. Use of the FAS scale can help to effectively prevent and address potential problems during handling, such as when placing a harness or ensuring a diabetic pet stays relaxed during an insulin injection.

An objective scale also allows for progress to be tracked and the animal's handling and care plan with their guardian and care providers to be adjusted as needed.

Slide 65

- Level 0 describes animals with no signs of FAS. Pets have relaxed body language and solicit interactions with people.
- Level 1 describes animals displaying 1 to 2 mild signs of FAS such as lip licking, avoiding eye contact, looking away without moving away, raising a paw, partial pupil dilation, and dogs panting with the commissure of the lips relaxed. These signs occur 4 times or fewer per minute. The animal is interested in reinforcers such as treats, play, and attention, and chooses to interact with the person.
- Level 2 describes animals showing 1 to 2 signs of moderate FAS such as ears held slightly back, lowered tail, slowed movements, seeking attention from the owner, or dogs panting with lips pulled back tightly. These signs are seen 4 times or fewer per minute. These pets still choose to interact with the caregiver and readily accept their preferred treats, toys, and attention.
- Level 3 describes animals displaying more than 2 signs of moderate FAS occurring more than 4 times per minute. They may show intermittent interest in reinforcers, sometimes refusing treats briefly. They may take treats roughly. These animals may interact with their handler or may be hesitant to do so, but they are not actively avoiding interaction.
- Level 4 describes animals experiencing severe FAS without overt aggression. These signs include hiding or immobility, fidgeting, attempting to escape, trembling, increased respiratory rate or effort, a tense, closed mouth, dilated pupils, ears held back or flat, tail tucked tightly or cats swishing the tail. These pets may or may not be interested in reinforcers such as food, toys, or attention, do not choose to interact with handlers, and generally avoid interacting with humans by moving away.
- Level 5 describes animals experiencing severe FAS with aggression such as a stiff body with direct staring, growling, lunging, barking, snarling, snapping, swatting, and more.
- Animals at level 4 and 5 FAS are too fearful to allow handling and any care procedure should stop immediately.



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Veterinary guidance is important for animals with a history of level 3, 4, and 5 FAS or animals at level 2 who are unable to enjoy treats or other positives or don't respond to adjustments in treat type or approach used. Advise the owner to seek veterinary guidance for treatment options when an animal's FAS level hovers around level 3 or escalates to level 4 or 5. Or, gain prior approval to reach out and work with the pet's veterinarian directly while the animal remains in your care.

Download and study the FAS Scale as it will be a key communication tool in your Fear Free journey!

Slide 66

NO AUDIO. Interactive FAS Scale or drag each dog

Slide 67

- The Four F's refer to: fret or fidget, freeze, flight and fight and they represent various states of stress.
- When observing animals' body language, it's important to pay attention to their overall body posture, hair coat, eyes, ears, mouth, tail, whether they're vocalizing, and the context.
- Don't punish warning signs like growling, because they allow animals to communicate their discomfort without progressing further into a physical fight.
- The FAS Scale was developed by Fear Free as a way of objectively measuring a dog or cat's stress level and guiding how to respond appropriately at each level. It is a key document with which to familiarize yourself.

Slide 68

Lesson 3: Considerate Approach

Slide 69

Considerate Approach is a core Fear Free concept that considers the experience from the pet's point of view and makes adjustments to ensure you approach the animal in the calmest, least confrontational way.

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Define Considerate Approach and give examples of how to employ it in a boarding and daycare environment
- State how underlying illness and pain impact the animal's experience
- Describe common signs of pain in animals



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Slide 70

Considerate Approach takes into account the sensory and environmental inputs an animal might experience. It encompasses elements that include the interaction between the pet professional and the animal and takes into account the animal's sensitivities and preferences. For Fear Free to be successful, understanding how animals view and experience their environment is essential.

Because an animal's sensory system differs from our own, they perceive and react to the world around them much differently than we do, and tend to be more sensitive to environmental stimuli.

Slide 71

Choosing appropriate scents is an important part of using a Considerate Approach with dogs and cats – especially because their sense of smell is so much more powerful than ours. Scents have the potential to increase or decrease animals' FAS, so it's important we take smell into consideration.

For example, pet providers should always beware of scents that many pets find aversive as these can increase FAS. These can include: cigarette smoke, perfumes, scented lotions, citrus smells, and cleaners such as ammonia and bleach. The scent of other pets, especially those from a pet in a stressed state, as can be smelled in eliminations, are especially alarming.

We can also use scent to our advantage, though, and help promote relaxation through smells! One popular Fear Free example is to use commercially available calming pheromones. Pheromones are chemical signals that allow members within a species to communicate with one another. They can impact animals' emotions. Other calming scents for pets might include lavender, coconut, vanilla, and chamomile.

Whenever possible, encourage guardians to bring and leave personal items to remain with their pet during the stay, including the pet's bedding, bed, carrier and crate, as well as any food puzzles, food and other items used on a regular basis. Avoid stripping the area completely of these comforting familiar scents by spot cleaning the space as needed and not washing personal items unless soiled or otherwise necessary.

Slide 72

One important way a boarding and daycare worker can use a Considerate Approach is when first greeting a new pet. Some examples of a Considerate Approach when greeting a dog include:

- Wait for a dog to approach you vs. you approaching them.
- Offer a treat by gently rolling or tossing it toward them.
- Kneel down or sit sideways facing the dog, rather than facing him head on.
- Avoid direct eye contact when possible. Some dogs can perceive this as a threat.
- For happy outgoing dogs, who approach you, sniff you, or solicit petting, try petting them under the chin or on the chest, shoulders or rump.



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Slide 73 Video: Shasta in office.

Here a Considerate Approach is used to greet a dog showing signs of fear. Strategies that seem most successful in earning her trust are gently tossed treats, a side-facing and lowered kneeling position and hands out only to deliver treats, not to pet, upon her approach.

Slide 74

Some examples of a Considerate Approach with a cat include:

- Make attempts to slow blink a few times at the cat to signal friendly intent. Soft, slow closing of the eye in a deliberate, slow blink communicates friendly intent and invites feline interaction.
- For outgoing cats who approach you, try extending just one finger near their cheek to see if they will sniff or rub their cheek on your finger. If they do, try petting their cheek, head, or under their chin as a first step.
- Allow them to hide for as long as they want to or need to.
- Offer ample places to climb and hide.
- Cage covers used on a portion of the cage or placed atop their open door carrier add extra options to either hide or look out as the cat's chooses.
- Cats are greatly stressed by changes in their caregiver, as already occurs when the cat is dropped off for care. Reduce further stress by keeping consistent caregivers and reducing rotation of staff with cats as much as possible.

Slide 75

While there are certain species generalities, it's essential to remember that every animal is an individual with unique insight and experience that impacts their emotional and behavioral response. What may be calming for one animal may induce stress in another. Some dogs love water, while others hate it. Some may enjoy petting, while others may not. Consider keeping an 'emotional record' of pets to refer to and regularly update for care that includes preferences, sensitivities and techniques and approaches that have proven beneficial for that pet. Doing so allows the provider to plan ahead and prepare a more successful approach and plan of care without needlessly exposing the animal to potential stressors or needing to reinvent the wheel each time for what works well to help the pet stay restful and relaxed during their stay.

The following resources offer insights into the sensory perception of dogs and cats. They can be used to better understand what the animal is likely to experience. You can then use that information to establish a Considerate Approach that's sensitive to the animal's needs.

Slide 76

One unseen aspect of Considerate Approach that greatly impacts the animal's experience and FAS level is their internal state. Internal stressors can include pain, illness, and physical discomfort.



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Recognizing pain, particularly chronic pain, in animals is sometimes challenging as they usually do not cry out in pain like we do unless it's a sudden injury. But, it's important to know some of the more common signs of pain so you can alert the pet guardian and they can alert their veterinarian. The following is not an exhaustive list, but provides some of the more common ways animals might display signs of pain:

- Change in behavior, such as increased agitation or aggression
- Slow to rise
- Uneven wearing of nails
- Carrying body weight disproportionately
- Yelping or grunting with a change in position
- Pacing or seeming restless and unable to settle
- Chewing or licking at a specific spot
- Reluctance to eat
- Squirming/moving away when certain areas are touched
- Urinating or defecating outside of the litter box

Slide 77

Considerate Approach takes into account the sensory and environmental inputs an animal might experience and uses this information to approach the animal in the calmest, least confrontational way.

In other words, Considerate Approach is about seeing the situation from the animal's perspective and adjusting elements of the environment, interaction or care in order to prevent and alleviate FAS and provide for comfort and enjoyment whenever possible.

Slide 78

Lesson 4: Gentle Control and Touch Gradient

Slide 79

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Describe Gentle Control and why it's important
- Describe three strategies involved in positioning a pet for Gentle Control
- Identify at least two Gentle Control tools and why they are useful
- Explain touch gradient and how it's incorporated into Gentle Control handling



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Gentle Control is how we safely and comfortably position animals for all handling and care. For boarding and daycare professionals, this might include transitioning the pet from their car or entry area and back into boarding or daycare, removing the pet from a kennel or run, cleaning the animal off as needed, administering oral and topical meds, delivering ear or eye medication, and more.

With Gentle Control, less is more. Hands are there more for stability, safety, and guidance than to hold the animal in place. An important aspect of both Considerate Approach and Gentle Control is strategically setting up the animal's space to encourage voluntary movement into given places and positions for care to be safely and comfortably conducted.

Gentle Control employs positive distractions and pleasurable rewards throughout to encourage a calmer, more enjoyable, collaborative care experience. A continuous treat distraction, such as a lickable food toy or Kong, or intermittent feeding of treat rewards, for instance, can positively distract and reward the animal for remaining in place while you administer ear or eye medication.

Slide 81

To understand the importance of Gentle Control, let's start with the more "old school" approach: using muscle and manpower to position and manhandle a struggling animal. For many animals, being restrained during medication administration, being wiped off, or while getting a bath, often evokes more FAS than the actual care itself.

Forced restraint typically holds animals in unnatural, uncomfortable positions, often with their legs overstretched. Forcibly restraining an animal is highly invasive, socially threatening, and can be dangerous for both human and animal. It is also likely to elevate future FAS. As such, overlooking rising FAS to get it done 'quick and dirty' is unwise.

Forcibly restraining an animal or holding him down "no matter what" disregards the animal's emotional distress and removes his option of 'flight' if he is held in such a way that he's unable to move. Wrestling or tightening your grip on a struggling animal increases the risk of physical and emotional injury. Many animals perceive this as a threat, and may escalate to 'fight' mode and use aggression to break free.

If the animal then bites, serious repercussions can occur, including legal liability and mandatory reporting of the bite, with the incident going down on the pet's permanent record and potential adverse consequences resulting. It's also extremely detrimental to the facility and the pet professional, who may need to take time off work in order to receive medical treatment and recover from an injury.

Forced restraint can have further far-reaching effects that include inability to calmly and thoroughly deliver quality care to the animal in the future.

Slide 82

The fear of falling is a primal fear that increases FAS and innate instinct to resist and flee to a place of perceived safety. Reducing slip-and-scare moments by providing balanced nonslip surfaces greatly



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increases safety and comfort. Offering nonslip surfaces for animals to stand and traverse on in their kennel, runs, in walkways, play areas, and the lobby space can have a significant impact on combating FAS. Placing a nonslip surface in the pet's space can offer added stability during mealtime for instance, an especially important gesture for an older or arthritic pet who may struggle to stay upright.

Slide 83

There are three Gentle Control strategies that can be used for moving a pet into a desired position.

The first strategy to try is to request a known behavior if applicable to the care scenario, rewarding the animal for voluntary participation. For instance, the animal may be asked to 'touch' using a hand target. Or, the animal may be asked to sit or down on cue to keep in a stationary position to allow for easier placement and fit of equipment or to allow for easier application of handling or care.

If after 3 tries the animal doesn't respond, the next strategy to try is using pleasant prompts, like a food or toy lure, to encourage the animal to willingly move into place.

If this doesn't work within 3 tries, the third option is to physically guide the animal into place in a minimally invasive, gentle manner. This can be useful when asking an animal to enter another room, or a crate during mealtime or when a new animal comes in to board.

Slide 84

Certain Gentle Control tools, like towels and muzzles, provide an added layer of protection against injury. Their use is akin to wearing a seatbelt while driving, as they complement other safe practices, like following speed limits and attending to road signs.

The goal is to provide a safe enough experience that the muzzle or towel is never truly *necessary*, but simply stands there as a final layer of protection that complements other safe practices taken to prevent an incident from occurring in the first place.

It's critical to note that Gentle Control tools such as towels and muzzles are NOT an excuse to overlook an animal's emotional wellbeing or ignore his signs of FAS. We must be every bit as attentive to the animal's FAS and take just as much care to alleviate it as we would without the tools.

Slide 85

Towels offer additional options beyond hands-on holds and offer both calming properties for some pets from a swaddle type snug hug as well as the additional ability to hide when stressed. Towel wrapping techniques also provide a physical barrier between human hands and the animal to limit direct physical contact that's often aversive to cats. If you ever need to quickly remove a cat from an area in an emergency, a towel might be a great option. Note that a second towel may be draped loosely overtop in addition to the swaddle to further allow the option to hide.

Note that animals should first be properly introduced to towels outside the context of a fear-inducing situation. Some animals might find towels aversive, so before attempting to use them to calm an animal,



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towels should be paired with treats and other positive things. They should be paired enough times that towels predict happiness and comfort for the animal and become something the animal looks forward to.

Slide 86

Muzzles enhance safety while allowing for increased freedom and fewer hands-on holds if the muzzle is properly selected, positively introduced, and appropriately used. An animal should be properly conditioned to wearing a muzzle long before it's needed for an actual procedure. Treats should be paired with the muzzle enough times that the animal starts to look forward to the muzzle because it has become a positive predictor of yummy treats rather than something the animal is scared of or tries to paw off.

A basket muzzle is Fear Free's preferred muzzle choice as it still allows the animal to more easily pant, eat certain treats and drink. Just as with towels, muzzles need to be proactively introduced to the animal BEFORE any fear-inducing situation. Just like towels, muzzles need to be paired with treats repeatedly beforehand, so that they elicit a happy response from the animal.

Slide 87 Video: GC with cat towel remove from kennel

In the following videos you'll see Gentle Control being used as a cat is taken out of a kennel. Yummy treats are dropped into the kennel and as the cat is eating them, the worker drapes a towel over the cat to form a protective barrier and to help minimize the cat's FAS.

Slide 88 Video: CA and GC little dog remove from kennel

Very similarly, a small dog is taken out of an upper kennel using the same Gentle Control approach, with dropping treats and using a towel to help reduce visual stimuli for the dog as she's carried past kennels.

Slide 89 Video: Chocolate dog leave run edit

Here's an example of using both Considerate Approach and Gentle Control to move a dog out of their kennel. Note the treats that are offered throughout and the crouched-down, side-facing position of the worker as she gently guides the shy dog out of his kennel.

Slide 90 Video: return dog to kennel with treats

Here treats are used to move a dog happily and easily back into his kennel.

Slide 91 Video: Approach and pickup of small dog

In the event a small dog needs to be picked up, such as a small dog that's more comfortable being carried than walking, here's a Gentle Control technique to consider.



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An important aspect of Gentle Control is Touch Gradient. Touch Gradient has two components:

1. Initiating and maintaining hands-on physical contact with the animal, using a sliding, continuous touch, and
2. Administering treatments that involve contact with the body, such as nail trims, by beginning with the less invasive touch to prepare the animal for more invasive procedures.

The continuous touch aspect of Touch Gradient is similar to the sustained touch used by a massage therapist who minimizes hands-on/hands-off changes during a massage. Maintaining touch once it's initiated minimizes surprise, lets the animal know where the person is at, and makes touch more predictable and easier to understand from the pet's point of view.

Slide 93

Touch gradient also starts in a place and with a type of touch that's easier and more comfortable to the animal, and progresses toward the final care place and procedure gradually as the animal remains relaxed.

For instance, rather than immediately reaching to grab a dog or cat's paw, it's better to start at the shoulder or hip and then move down the leg using a continuous sliding touch to eventually touch and then pick up the paw you need to attend to.

A boarding and daycare worker might use a touch gradient to check out a sore paw pad, to clean off a soiled rear end, or to administer ear medication.

The ideal area to initiate touch varies by species and depends upon individual preference and current condition. The animal is likely to find touch on areas that are sore or irritated to be aversive, even if he normally tolerates touch in those areas.

In general, dogs dislike being petted on the head and most dogs are receptive to petting on the chest, shoulder, underside of the neck, under the chin or along their back or upper sides.

Most cats are concerned with handling below the neck, so it may be best to avoid that area for initial touch unless going to the area just above the base of the tail that's well accepted by some cats. Cats are generally most receptive to handling that's initiated on the head, cheeks, or neck.

Adjust or stop based on the animal's body language and level on the FAS scale.

Slide 94 Video: Touch gradient paw pickup

This clip shows a touch gradient option to pick up a dog's front paw. The handler starts with petting the dog on the shoulder, then glides that same hand down the dog's leg, maintaining contact with the leg, picking up her paw, and gently manipulating the toes.



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Slide 95

This interactive slide lets you see which areas are good starting points for a touch gradient on a dog.

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- Forced restraint can evoke even more FAS than the care itself.
- With Gentle Control, less is more.
- Gentle Control tools, like basket muzzles and towels, can prioritize safety and reduce FAS by allowing for increased mobility, the added option to hide and less hands-on holding.
- Touch Gradient uses a continuous, gliding touch, starting with less invasive touch and only gradually moving to other areas or to more intense touch as the animal remains calmly relaxed.

Slide 97

Lesson 5: Arrival at the Facility

Slide 98

One of the most stressful places for pets during a boarding and daycare stay is often the lobby or waiting area, especially if they are new to the facility. Try to prevent long waits and minimize linger time in confined spaces like the lobby that can be stressful places for pets and people to meet.

Coordinate and communicate movements of pets in, out and through the facility to reduce the risk of stressful encounters, such as head-on meetings of a dog going in and one going out, when walking through the hallways or doorway at the same time.

If possible, streamline the intake, drop-off, pickup and checkout process by offering remote filling and update of needed paperwork, signatures and other forms as may be done by phone, email, physical mail, and through other online offerings.

Slide 99

When a person arrives to drop off or pick up their pet, consider alternative options to waiting in line in the lobby area, such as people checking in by text or phone, or having a moving line of cars, allowing the person and pet to primarily remain in the comfort of their own car as they wait.

If a wait in the lobby is unavoidable, set up the waiting space to allow for physical distance and visual separation between pets. Additionally, offer lender leashes for those pets whose people forgot their own or those brought in on a retractable lead that offers little control.

Encourage people to bring in their pet separately from the carrying of their pet's equipment, such as food, medication and bedding. Or, when possible, offer assistance to streamline this process.



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Slide 100 Video: Moving hesitant dog

A worker helps a hesitant dog feel better about leaving her by offering lots and lots of tasty treats as encouragement. It might have been more efficient for the person moving the dog to stand upright and turn her shoulders in the direction she wants the dog to go.

Slide 101

The lobby area can be one of the most stressful places for pets, so try to minimize their wait time in any lobby and minimize animals seeing or contacting one another.

Slide 102

- In conclusion: It's important to attend to early signs of fear, anxiety and stress (FAS) before they escalate.
- There are 4 behavioral categories of responses to FAS, often called the "Four F's": Fret or Fidget, Freeze, Flight, and Fight.
- When observing body language, pay attention to animals' overall body posture, mouth, hair coat, tail, eyes, ears, and whether or not they are vocalizing.
- The FAS Scale is a consistent, objective way to evaluate animals' stress levels in the moment and help people respond accordingly.
- Considerate Approach includes taking into account the sensory and environmental inputs an animal might experience.
- Gentle Control involves less hands-on restraint, more positive distractions like treats, and sometimes tools like towels and muzzles.

Slide 103

Thank you to our module author, Mikkel Becker.

Slide 104

Fear Free would like to thank its corporate program members.